

Session 1

FBCF Vision Statement

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ”

- Colossians 1:28

My Calling as a Pastor: To see to it that everyone who God entrusts to me becomes mature in Christ

End Result: For Jesus to say of me, “you faithfully ministered to every person I sent you by helping them become mature in me.”

Maturity in Christ: To comprehend and love the person and work of Jesus so deeply that every part of your life is transformed by Him, for His glory.

I. How do I become mature in Christ?

1. Grow in your comprehension and love for who Jesus is (1:15-20)
2. Grow in your comprehension and love for what Jesus has done (1:13-14, 21, 2:13-15)

II. What does maturity in Christ look like?

1. Bearing Fruit (1:9-10)
2. Gospel Sacrifice (1:24-27, 2:1-3)
3. Killing Sin (3:5-10)
4. A Loving Fellowship (3:12-17)
5. Bible relationships (3:18-25)

Session 2

Nine New Testament Pictures of the Church

Opening Truth:

In the New Testament, God uses many different word pictures to describe the church. These pictures show us how important the church is to Him and teach us about His desires concerning it.

1. John 10:14-16, 27-28; Luke 12:3 Word Picture for the Church: Flock of Sheep

Key Principles:

- Those who hear the call of Christ and come to Him are His sheep.
- Jesus knows His sheep and His sheep know Him.
- Jesus' followers receive His perfect leadership and protection.
- Jesus' followers need not fear because it is God's good pleasure to give them the kingdom.

2. Ephesians 5:25-32 Word Picture for the Church: Bride

Key principles:

- The church is cherished by Christ with unconditional, sacrificial love.
- The church needs Christ's sanctifying, nourishing headship.
- The church will eventually be presented in splendor before God.

3. John 15:1-11 Word Picture for the Church: Vineyard

Key principles:

- The church is organic and therefore requires constant attention to grow properly.
- The church receives God's personal care.

- The connection with Christ, His word, His love, and, by extension, each other is vital to experience God's joy and to avoid destruction.

4. Corinthians 3:5-9a Word Picture for the Church: Field/Crop

Key principles:

- The church needs evangelists and pastor/teachers to work diligently in order to grow.
- The church will grow however God chooses for it to grow and He gets all the credit.
- The church must keep its only allegiance to Christ and not form divisions over the leadership of mere men.

5. 1 Corinthians 3:9b-17 Word Picture for the Church: Building

Key Principles:

1. The only solid foundation of any church is Jesus Christ.
2. Ministers in the church are like God's enlisted builders who work for a common purpose.
3. The building work of ministers will either have eternal spiritual value or will prove empty.

6. Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5 Word Picture for the Church: House

Key principles:

- The church is no longer a foreign people to God but now part of His household.
- The apostles and prophets are a vital part of founding a church on Christ.
- The church is literally the dwelling place of God.

- Every member of the church is a living stone who has a vital part in God's building.
- Every member of the church is a priest who is called to serve and minister in God's house.

7. 1 Timothy 3:14-16 Word Picture for the Church: Household/Pillar

Key principles:

- There is a standard of dignity for how members of the church should conduct themselves.
- The church is God's voice of truth in the world with a specific message and doctrinal standard.

8. 1 Corinthians 12:12-21 Word Picture for the Church: Body

Key principles:

- The church is a unified body made up of individual members.
- The Holy Spirit is the glue that holds us all together.
- Every member of the body has a vital function that should be recognized and appreciated by every other member.

9. 1 Peter 2:9-10; Colossians 1:13 Word Picture for the Church: Nation/Kingdom

Key principles:

- The church is a new special nation of people who have now received God's mercy.
- The church is chosen, royal, and set apart for God's own possession.
- The purpose of the church is to proclaim the excellencies of God's rescuing power.

- A local church is like an embassy that represents the interests of one kingdom (God's) amidst another kingdom (the world).
- The church is called to be ambassadors of God's kingdom (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).
- The church is called to follow Christ's example with Peter by doing its best to recognize and receive true kingdom citizens on the basis of faith and repentance (Matt 16:13-19; 18:15-20).

Session 3

What Is a Southern Baptist?

We are a Baptist church. Though the Baptist tradition has been very rich since the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, conservative Baptist beliefs are firmly grounded in the picture of the first century church that the New Testament provides. Even the name “Baptist” dates back to the biblical person of John the Baptist.

- 1. A Baptist is one who has experienced salvation through personal faith in Jesus Christ.**

Baptists do not believe in salvation by association. The faith of priest, parent, or another religious person cannot make you right with God (1 Tim. 2:5). Every individual must come to a time in life when he or she receives Jesus Christ as personal Savior (John 3:3). (This personal experience must be externally demonstrated through faith and repentance. See Appendix 2.)

- 2. A Baptist is one who acknowledges the inerrancy of Scripture.**

The Bible is God's truth without any error. That is the foundation of all we do and believe. God's Word clearly declares, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Baptists have always recognized and often drawn up “confessions of faith.” These have been and continue to be guides in understanding the basic beliefs of Baptists, but no confession has a creedal power over any individual or church. God's Word is our final authority and we recognize its sufficiency.

- 3. A Baptist is one who acknowledges the lordship of Jesus Christ.**

All of our worship and service centers on Him. He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell (Col. 1:18-19).

We also recognize that the Bible testifies of Jesus Christ and is our source of understanding of His Person, Presence and relationship with us. All we teach and experience regarding Jesus Christ must be consistent with the revealed truth of God in the Scripture.

4. A Baptist is one who recognizes and understands that God is triune.

We believe the Bible teaches that God is eternally One in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each is fully God, yet God is One. There is no division in the godhead and no Person of the godhead is less than fully divine.

5. A Baptist is one who recognizes the autonomy of the local church.

There is no such thing as “The Baptist Church.” There are only local Baptist churches. The local Baptist Church is “Baptist Headquarters.” No individual or entity outside of the local Baptist church has any authority or control over that congregation. Each congregation is free and empowered to minister as it sees the will of God for its ministry and mission. A Baptist church, like first-century New Testament churches, is a local independent body of born-again baptized believers joined together in Christ for worship and ministry in their community and around the world.

6. A Baptist is one who has a New Testament understanding of the two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Neither of these ordinances are sacraments. Neither have power to transmit saving grace. Both are to be preceded by acceptance of Christ by faith as Savior and Lord. Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper are essential to salvation, but both are vital to a full and meaningful Christian life. The church is to keep faithfully these ordinances until Jesus comes again. Both the Lord's Supper and baptism are symbols of our faith and testify of the work and ministry of Jesus Christ. As the name Baptist implies, we insist upon baptism by immersion of the body of the believer in water.

7. A Baptist is one who believes in the command of the Great Commission and has a deep commitment to evangelism and world missions.

The church exists as a place of nurture and worship, but it is also a place of witness and outreach to the ends of the earth. The marching orders for the church are clearly seen in Matt. 28:18-20. A Baptist is one who has accepted that challenge and assignment from our Lord Jesus Christ. We understand that our Lord Jesus Christ has the world in His heart and the closer we draw to Him, the more mission-minded we will become.

8. A Baptist is one who fully advocates and supports the cause of religious liberty and freedom for all.

We believe that the church and state must maintain separate identities and functions for the good of both. Throughout Christian history, whenever religion has controlled the state or the state has controlled religion, both have been corrupted, and religious and civil liberty have suffered.

We do not believe, however, that this truth prohibits the involvement of Christians in public life. Christians must be involved in public life at every level. Individual Christians and Christian institutions should seek to influence government at every level in the realm of public morals but must not seek to control the state. Neither should the state seek to control people's personal religious practices or the expression of organized religion.

Condensed and adapted from 10/1/2000 - James T. (Jimmy) Draper, Jr., past president of LifeWay Christian Resources. Available from <http://www.baptist2baptist.net/b2barticle.asp?id=226>; Internet.

What is a Southern Baptist?

1. Someone who supports the Cooperative Program.

The Cooperative Program consists of our national convention (The Southern Baptist Convention), our state convention (State Convention of Baptists in Ohio) and our local association (The Greater Dayton Association of Baptists).

Throughout the year, we have three special offerings that support the Southern Baptist Convention. One is the Annie Armstrong offering (March) supporting the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Next is the Ray Roberts offering (September) supporting the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. Next is the Lottie Moon offering (December) supporting the International Mission Board (IMB).

2. Someone who believes that we should cooperate with other Southern Baptist churches.

Through the cooperative program of Southern Baptists, we partner with over forty-thousand other Baptist congregations for the sake of missions. This cooperation first connects us with other Baptist churches in Ohio and through them to the national convention.

What is the Cooperative Program?

Since its inception in 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has always had one mission—the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). To fulfill its assigned part of this divine mandate, each SBC entity made special offering appeals to the churches. This method was referred to as the “societal” approach to missions and resulted in severe financial deficits, competition among entities, overlapping pledge campaigns, and frequent emergency appeals which greatly hampered the expanding ministry opportunities God was giving Southern Baptists. Some entities took out loans to cover operating costs until pledges or special offerings were received.

In 1919, the leaders of the SBC proposed the 75 Million Campaign, a five-year pledge campaign that, for the first time, included everything—the missions and ministries of all the state conventions as well as that of the Southern Baptist Convention. Though falling short of its goals, a God-given partnership of missions support was conceived—The Cooperative Program. Since its launch in 1925, the effectiveness of the Cooperative Program has been dependent upon individuals, churches, state conventions, and SBC entities cooperating and working toward a common goal of sharing the gospel with every person on the planet.

How It Works

Simply put, it begins with you. You give yourself first to God (2 Cor. 8:5). Next, out of gratitude and obedience to God for what He has done for you, you commit to give back to Him, through your church, a portion of what He provides. This is commonly called a tithe and represents ten percent of your income (Lev. 27:30, Mal. 3:10).

Your church decides the next step. Every year your church prayerfully decides how much of its undesignated gifts will be committed to reaching people in your state and around the world through the Cooperative Program. This amount is then forwarded to your state Baptist convention.

During the annual meeting of your state convention, messengers from your church and other churches across the state decide what percentage of Cooperative Program gifts contributed by local congregations stays in your state to support local missions and ministries. The percentage to be forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention for North American and international missions and ministries is also determined at this time.

At the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, messengers from across the country decide how the gifts received from the states will be distributed among SBC entities. These gifts are used by Southern Baptist entities to send and support missionaries, train pastors, and other ministry leaders; provide relief for retired ministers and widows; and address social, moral, and ethical concerns relating to our faith and families.

The bottom line – people around the world hear the gospel and receive Christ.

What It Does

Churches in your state work together through your state convention to support a wide array of ministries and missions including evangelism efforts, children's homes, volunteer missions, missions education, new churches, colleges and universities, collegiate ministries, camps, and much more.

Through the International Mission Board (imb.org), Southern Baptists support approximately 4,800 missionaries who are engaging 787 people groups across the globe.

Church planting and evangelism efforts coordinated by the North American Mission Board (namb.net) and individual state conventions result in more than 1,000 evangelistic churches planted each year.

Six Southern Baptist seminaries (Southern, Southeastern, Midwestern, Southwestern, Golden Gate, and New Orleans) educate in excess of 16,000 pastors, missionaries, and future church leaders each year.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (erlc.com) is dedicated to addressing social, moral, and ethical concerns, with particular attention to their impact on American families and their faith. They also provide print resources that offer scriptural responses to the moral and ethical problems of our culture.

Although they receive no Cooperative Program support, LifeWay Christian Resources, Guidestone Financial Resources and the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) actively promote Cooperative Program in publications and missions resources.

Its Potential

If "two are better than one" (Eccl. 4:9), then what about 16 million? This is the current membership in more than 45,000 Southern Baptist churches across the United States. With a global population exceeding 6.5 billion and a command to take the gospel to every nation, we must enhance our cooperative efforts if we are going to fulfill Christ's command.

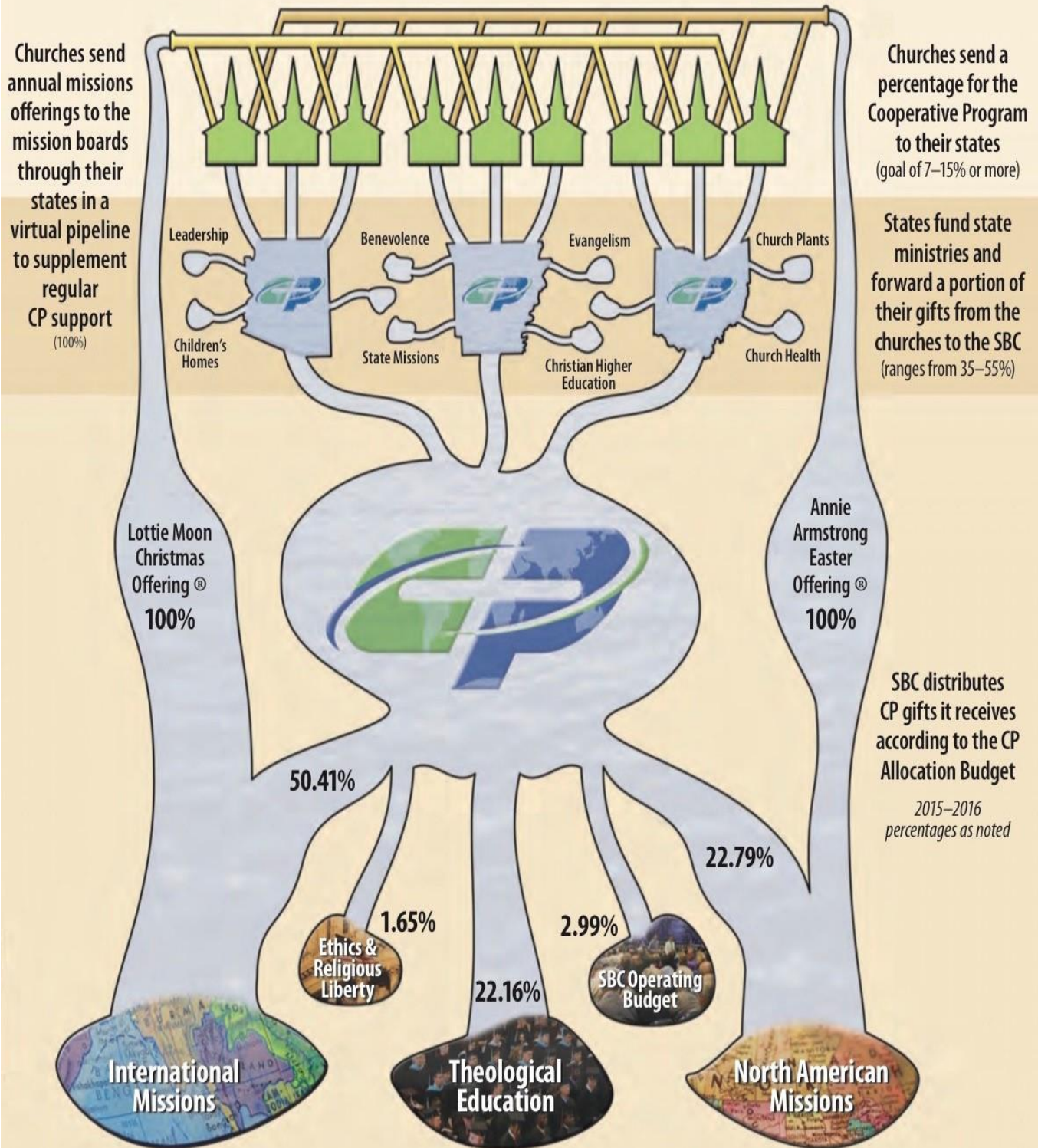
To help Cooperative Program reach its potential, would you please:

Pray. Pray regularly for your Southern Baptist missionaries in your state and around the globe. "Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers." Matthew 9:38 (HCSB)

Go. Be involved in some sort of missions endeavor. Talk with your pastor about the available opportunities. You are God's missionary right where you live. "Go...and make disciples of all nations." Matthew 28:19 (HCSB)

Give. Out of love for the Lord, give regularly to Him through your church. If you are not tithing, begin to do so. Additionally, discover the blessings of giving beyond the tithe. Encourage your church to increase its participation in the Cooperative Program.

The Cooperative Program: Like a Mighty River



Session 4

Core Ministry Philosophies

Spiritual Disciplines: The health and growth of a church will never go beyond the health and growth of its individual members. Every member must feel a personal drive to walk before Christ as an authentic disciple. It is absolutely a top priority for every believer to trust in the gospel, to hunger for God, to feed on His Word, to pray, and to commit to God's kingdom. FBCF is nothing if its individual members are not living lives accountable to Christ (John 21:21-22, 1 Tim. 4:7).

Accountability: Flowing out of the personal responsibility each individual has to follow Christ is the help a believer receives from a local body of believers. We cannot be like Jesus without the help of the local church. Because of this, one of the things it means to be a church member is to embrace accountability from other brothers and sisters who will help you be more like Jesus. Corporate accountability also means that you are willing to biblically call out sin in your fellow church member. In other words, accountability is a two-way street (Mt. 18:15, Gal. 6:1-3, 1 Cor. 5, James 5:19-20).

Family Worship: Family worship is when families worship at home. Parents should intentionally set aside a time during the day to read, sing, and pray to teach their children how to know God and trust in Jesus. Families can expect a set of devotional questions that relate to each sermon to assist them in family worship (Deut. 6:6-8).

Family-Friendly Corporate Worship: We believe that gathering for worship as an entire church family is the foundational weekly event of the church body to which every member must be committed. Corporate worship serves the huge purposes of rejoicing in our great God, encouraging one another, and being nourished personally. Because it is for the whole church, we encourage families to have their children present in the Sunday gatherings. During corporate worship you can expect to participate in similar ways to family worship at home as we read the Bible, sing the Bible, and pray the Bible.

We also recognize that families have different dynamics that require different needs with regard to the decision of when to include their children in corporate worship. Therefore, we provide childcare (infants through K) and **Kidz Worship**

Extended (KWX, 1st and 2nd Grade) during the sermon as options for parents/guardians.

Mutually Edifying Praise Music: Our music ministry exists to help the church worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). We want to do this through mutually edifying praise music. Instead of getting wrapped up in favorite music styles, we want the focus to be on the cross of Jesus and the rich promises that are ours in Christ. If we do this with excellence, the entire church family should be able to appreciate our musical direction and participate with whole hearts (Eph 5:18-21).

Expository, Doctrinal, Christ-Centered Preaching: We desire for our preaching to focus on God's word (expository), His truth (doctrinal), and His gospel (Christ-centered). If we do this well, our sermons will honor God and dynamically impact the human heart, the real place where lives are changed. Much of the preaching in our culture sacrifices transforming power for attempts at popular appeal. Though we earnestly strive for our sermons to engage, we mainly care about being reliable stewards of God's message (Col 1:28; 2 Tim 3:16-4:4).

5th Sunday's: Every month with a 5th Sunday (4 times a year) we observe the Lord's Supper, share a potluck meal in the fellowship hall and have a family meeting. 5th Sunday's are designed for reflection (The Lord's Supper), fellowship (sharing a meal), handling the family matters (Family Meeting), and rest (No Sunday evening activities). At family meetings, we will hear from all teams leads and have the opportunity to discuss other business.

Discipleship Classes: Discipleship classes (DC's) are vital for a believer's growth in Christ because they provide bible study and fellowship that is based on Titus 2 principles. These classes are for you if you truly want to be discipled and learn how to disciple others. We believe that a healthy church will foster many opportunities for interaction among people of different generations. We grow as believers when we intentionally befriend other believers who are not like us but have the common ground of the gospel. These classes meet on Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:15 and study various topics.

Community Groups: While generational relationships are important, we also recognize the value of meeting with others in your life-stage. We call these home groups because they met in various homes throughout the week. Home groups

have four major purposes: Bible study, fellowship, prayer, and outreach. Home groups will provide opportunities to be obedient to the Great Commission as they are designed to meet your neighbors and serve the community (Acts 2:46-47).

Sacrificial Serving and Giving: We believe that a member's growth will be limited if he or she is only an absorber of the ministry of others. Dynamic growth in Christ really happens when we follow Him in sacrificial service and giving. We encourage each member to find at least one regular role of service within our church. Additionally, we believe that God deserves our trust with regard to money, so we encourage each member to give faithfully to our ministry. The fact is that our church would not exist without the voluntary serving and giving of our members, but the greater fact is that God is trustworthy with our time and resources (2 Cor 9:6-8).

Word-Based Outreach: In the Bible, the church has one main strategy for reaching the world: Talk to others about Jesus. Jesus simply said, "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Churches can make the mistake of caring for people's physical needs without caring for their spiritual needs (Mt. 29:19-20). Churches can also make the mistake of only caring for people's spiritual needs without caring for their physical needs (Mt. 25:31-46). While both are important, meeting physical needs should always be a means to meeting the primary need, which is to know Christ as Lord and Savior. Therefore, at FBCF we desire for all of our organized outreach attempts and all of our member relationships with the lost to have as its main goal that we talk about the good news of Jesus Christ and invite others into the family of God.

Key Term: Family Meetings (Formerly Business Meetings)

Session 5

Defining Discipleship

I. What does it mean to make disciples? (Mt. 28:19-20)

General Idea: God in His grace has not made us to walk alone in the Christian life. In one-on-one discipling relationships, two Christians of the same sex meet to study Scripture, hold one another accountable, and pray. Within this basic framework, discipling relationships may take a number of different shapes: an elder member may disciple a younger member, a more mature Christian might disciple a younger Christian, or peers in the faith might effectively disciple one another.

The discipling meetings center on discussion and application of a spiritually rich book or Bible passage and are appended by prayer. One-on-one discipling acts as a catalyst to Christian growth, helping us bear one another's sorrows and joys.

Compact Definition: The intentional encouragement of Christians on the basis of deliberate, loving relationships and training in God's Word. *Capitolhillbaptist.org*

II. How can I support a culture of discipleship?

1. Understand the Context of Discipleship: The Local Church (2 Tim. 2:1-2)
2. Welcome a Generational Model: (Titus 2:1-6)
 - a. Discipleship Classes (A rotation of topical classes with no demographic boundaries)
 - b. Look forwards and backwards

III. Why should I support a culture of discipleship?

1. For the health of our church (Depth and Breath)
2. For the Unity of our church (Bridging the generational gap)
3. To love your brother in Christ (Accountability)

IV. 5 Myths

1. Only pastors and teachers are called to disciple people.
2. Our church is fine the way it is.
3. With this model I cannot meet with my former SS class.
4. Old people and young people are not interested in mixing together.
5. New models produce new members.

v. Who are you discipling?

Session 6

Defining Evangelism

I. What is Evangelism? Evangelism is teaching (*Heralding, proclaiming, preaching*) the gospel (*the message from God that leads us to salvation*) with the aim (*hope, desire, goal*) to persuade (*convince, convert*) - J. Mack Stiles Evangelism

A. A Biblical understanding of faith. Faith is trusting in the promises of God (Heb. 11:1)

B. A Biblical understanding of repentance. Repentance is when someone turns from their sinful lifestyle to obey Jesus. (Luke 13:5)

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” - 2 Peter 3:9

II. What Evangelism is Not

A. Inviting people to church

B. Transfer growth

C. Counseling someone through a problem using Biblical principles

D. Befriending someone so they may observe your moral Christian lifestyle

E. Supporting Missions efforts

III. Community Groups: Peer groups that meet outside the church building for the purpose of evangelism and service. (Acts 2:46-47).

A. Meet in homes- Groups that meet in homes should seek to meet and pray for lost neighbors and intentionally befriend them to share Christ with them and meet different needs they may have.

B. Service- Groups can also decide what service projects they could organize that would allow them to meet and serve lost people as they look for opportunities to share Jesus

IV. Prayer: *“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*
Luke 10:2

Session 7

Benefits of Membership

- Identified as a genuine believer in the world. To be a member of a church is to be officially affiliated in this world with God's kingdom.

Ephesians 2:19: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."

- Experience God's blessing through obedience to the Scriptures and regularly attending and participating.

Hebrews 10:24-25: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

- Under spiritual protection of godly leaders who have your permission to be your pastors. Membership tells the pastors of the church who they are spiritually accountable to God to shepherd.

Hebrews 13:17: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."

- Help decide direction of the church through voting privileges (e.g. leaders, financial decisions, etc.).

Acts 15:22: "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas."

- Ability to serve on teams and perform ministries.

Acts 6:3: "Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."

- Experience accountability. The Bible gives clear guidelines for holding each other accountable (Matthew 18:15-20 and Galatians 6:1-4).

Galatians 6:1 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

- Receive the care of the church. The church is a community of prayer where emotional and spiritual needs are met. It is also a guard and support for marriages and families.

Hebrews 3:13: “But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

- Receive financial support for certain needs. We have a benevolent fund for members.

Acts 2:44-45: “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”

Expectations of Members

The following points give a well-rounded picture of a healthy FBCF member. We desire that every member take all of these aspects of membership seriously. A huge part of discipleship is simply being plugged in and committed. God is faithful to us; may we be faithful to Him!

- To be personally pursuing a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. This pursuit means trusting in the gospel, being biblically baptized, praying/fasting, reading the Bible, learning doctrine, repenting from sin, and sharing faith with others.

John 15:4: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”

- To be actively pursuing close relationships with the FBCF family. Outgoing toward others, learning about each other, praying for each other, sharing life together, confronting and challenging one another.

John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- To be faithful in attendance on Sunday morning when you are home and in worship with a different church when you are away. There are three motives for being faithful in attendance: 1. Giving to God the worship that is due him. 2. Giving the FBCF family the encouragement you bring them. 3. Giving yourself the joy and nourishment of being a part of corporate worship.

Acts 2:46-47: “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

- To be connected to a discipleship class. Two huge things grow out of these groups:

Being disciplined and learning how to disciple (Titus 2).

- To be serving FBCF in at least one specific way (Examples below):

Children’s ministry, Outreach, Prayer, Facilities, Youth, Welcome team, Choir/Praise team, Teaching, or Hosting/being involved in a Community Group (This is not an exhaustive list)

1 Peter 4:10 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.”

- To be giving faithfully. Our offering contributes to missions, ministries, facilities, and staff. It is not about equal gifts from every member but sharing in sacrifice. Your pastors do not ever see the giving amounts of anyone.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all contentment in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work."

Session 8

Church Structure

At FBCF we believe the Bible teaches Jesus-ruled, Pastor-led, Deacon-served, Congregationalism.

Level 1: Jesus

Jesus is our chief shepherd and head of his Church. All believers submit to his leadership and guidance (Mt. 6:18, 1 Peter 5:4, Col.1:18).

Level 2: Pastors

The Chief Shepherd appoints under shepherds called pastors lead His Church. Pastors oversee all areas of the church to ensure the spiritual health of the church. Even though pastors oversee all areas of the church, there are three specific areas that he focuses on. 1) to lead the church in worship. 2) to lead the membership to be more like Jesus. 3) to lead the church in obedience to the Great Commission. A pastor must be a man of God who demonstrates the maturity, calling, and giftings appropriate to the task.

1 Peter 5:1-4 “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

Hebrews 13:17 “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

1 Timothy 3:1-7 “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his

own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”

Of course, the pastors welcome your individual feedback, thoughts, and concerns, but they are not called to submit to all the individual opinions of church members. Frequently, the pastors may defer their own opinions to someone else’s opinion for the benefit of the congregation at large, but it is impossible for them to please everyone, nor should they be expected to. You must remember that your pastors love you and this church, are grounded in sound doctrine, are called by God, are given a corporate trust, carry difficult burdens, and hold many things in balance in every decision they make. You are not always going to understand all the reasons at work behind their decisions. Please be quick to encourage and slow to critique.

It is also important to recognize that the role of church pastors is not to do all the work of the ministry but to equip the entire church body for the work. Ephesians 4:11-12 explains, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” Therefore, there are numerous ways for church members to serve at FBCF both unofficially and officially. Unofficial roles would include volunteering in various ministries, showing up for special events, and taking personal initiative to meet needs. Official roles include serving as a deacon or on a team.

Level 3: Deacons

The purpose of deacons is to assist the pastors by leading in the practical service needs of the church family. According to the Bible, deacons are to be men who demonstrate maturity in the faith. The key distinction between the qualifications of pastors and of deacons is that pastors must also be equipped to teach.

1 Timothy 3:8-10 “Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.”

Level 4: Congregation

The congregation is called to support its leadership (Heb. 13:17), receive new members (Mt. 16:19), be the final authority in matters of church discipline (Mt. 18:17), and be involved in the direction of the church. If pastors are the steering wheel of the church, then the congregation is the brakes. The relationship between a congregation and its pastors is to be one of love, respect, and genuine gentleness and tenderness towards one another (1 Peter 5).

Session 9

Understanding Spiritual Gifts

By the Holy Spirit, Christ has given various gifts to all His people for the purpose of building up their faith and bringing glory to God.

Key Passages

Romans 1:11-12; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11

Primary Metaphor

The body of Christ has many members with different but equally important functions. As with a body, each member belongs to all of the others, needs all of the others, and should function for the sake of all of the others (1 Cor 12:12-26; Eph 4:4-16).

Vital Truth

Individual gifts are worthless if they are not exercised in love (1 Cor 13:1-13).

Various Gifts Listed in the Bible

Rom 12:6-8	1 Cor 12:8-10	1 Cor 12:28	Eph 4:11	1 Pet 4:11
Prophecy Service Teaching Exhortation Giving Leadership Mercy	Wisdom Knowledge Faith Healing Miracles Prophecy Discernment Tongues Interpretation	Apostles Prophets Teachers Miracles Healing Helping Administration Tongues	Apostles Prophets Evangelists Shepherds Teachers	Speaking Service

Given the diversity of gifts in the New Testament, it is best to understand the various gifts listed as examples of the many unique ways that the Spirit works among God's people.

The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts have two primary purposes:

1. Building up the body

Romans 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

2. Bringing glory to God

1 Peter 4:10-11 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

An Important Distinction

Spiritual gifts are not the same as natural gifts. Just because a person is a good speaker, that doesn't mean this gift is effective for strengthening faith in Christ. Just because a person is a good administrator, that doesn't mean he will function in the church in gospel-centered ways. A gift is only "of the Spirit" if it functions to truly build up the body and direct attention and praise to Christ.

Good Advice from John Piper

You shouldn't bend your mind too much trying to label your spiritual gift before you use it. That is, don't worry about whether you can point to prophecy, or teaching, or wisdom, or knowledge, or healing, or miracles, or mercy, or administration, etc., and say, "That's mine." The way to think is this: The reason we have spiritual gifts is so that we can strengthen other people's faith; here is someone whose faith is in jeopardy; how can I help him? Then do or say what seems most helpful, and if the person is helped, then you may have discovered one of your gifts. If you warned him of the folly of his way and he repented, then perhaps you have the gift of "warning." If you took a walk with her and said you knew what she was going through and lifted her hope, then perhaps you have

the gift of “empathy.” If you had them over to your home when they were new and lonely, then perhaps you have the gift of “hospitality.” We must not get hung up on naming our gifts. The thing to get hung up on is, “Are we doing what we can do to strengthen the faith of the people around us?”

Excerpt from “Spiritual Gifts” by John Piper:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/spiritual-gifts>; Internet.

Session 10

Steps to Joining FBCF

1. Attend our new members' class

This is where you will learn about our church and prayerfully consider whether God is leading you to join.

2. Interview with pastors

During this interview the pastors will ask you questions about your commitment to Jesus and your possible need to be baptized.

3. Receive a "vote of affirmation" from the congregation.

After you receive the support from the pastors you will be presented to the church family at the end of a Sunday service where a pastor will 1) inform the church that you have completed all steps necessary to join, 2) express the pastors recommendation for your membership to the congregation, and 3) ask the church family to receive you by a vote of affirmation and commit themselves to your spiritual good by a verbal "amen."

Salvation in Christ

Salvation in Christ requires a heart change that is expressed in two main ways. First is faith or trust in Jesus. Hebrews 11:6 says, *"without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."* This faith involves a heart confession. Romans 10:9 says, *"if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with your heart you believe and are justified, and with your mouth you confess and are saved."*

Next is the heart change of turning away from your sins which is motivated by a person's love for God and gratitude for Christ's death on their behalf. Genuine faith in Jesus always results in a changed life. The Bible calls this repentance. Luke 13:5 says, *"I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*

A heart change like this does not mean that we will be without sin. Committing to Christ requires a lifetime of sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. We will never perfectly

following Christ's commands on this side of heaven, but the Holy Spirit will constantly encourage us and help us grow throughout our lives. John 15:2 says, *"Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit."*

Taken from I Am A Church Member by Thom S. Rainer; (Nashville, B&H Publishing Group, 2013).

I am a church member.

I like the metaphor of membership. It's not membership as in a civic organization or a country club. It's the kind of membership given to us in 1 Corinthians 12: "Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it" (1 Cor. 12:27). Because I am a member of the body of Christ, I must be a functioning member, whether I am an "eye," an "ear," or a "hand. " As a functioning member, I will give, I will serve. I will minister. I will evangelize, I will study, I will seek be a blessing to others. I will remember that "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).

I am a church member,

I will seek to be a source of unity in the church. I know there are no perfect pastors, staff, or other church members. But neither am I. I will not be a source of gossip or dissension. One of the greatest contributions I can make is to do all I can in God's power to help keep the church in unity for the sake of the gospel.

I am a church member.

I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires. That is self-serving. I am in the church to serve others and to serve Christ. My Savior went to a cross for me. I can deal with any inconveniences and matters that are just not my preference or style.

I am a church member.

I will pray for my pastor every day. His work is never-ending. His days are filled with constant demand for his time — with the need to prepare sermons, with those who are rejoicing in births, with those who are traveling through the valley of the shadow of death, with critics, with the hurts and hopes of others, and with

the need to be a husband and a father. My pastor cannot serve our church in his own power, I will pray for God's strength for him and his family every day.

I am a church member.

I will lead my family to be good members of this church as well. We will pray together for our church. We will worship together in our church. We will serve together in our church. And we will ask Christ to help us fall deeper in love with this church, because He gave His life for her.

I am a church member.

And I thank God that I am.

I AM A SOLDIER

I Am A Soldier

I am a soldier in the army of my God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer. The Holy Spirit is my code of conduct. Faith, prayer and the word are my weapons of warfare.

I have been taught by the Holy spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire. I am a volunteer in this army, and am enlisted for eternity. I will not get out, sell out, be talked out or pushed out. I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable. If my God needs me, I am there. I am a soldier. I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up, or pepped up. I am a soldier.

No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me or lure me. I am a soldier. I am not a wimp. I am in place, saluting my king, obeying His orders, praising His name and building His kingdom! No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards or candy or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered for. I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing. If i end up with nothing, i will still come out ahead. I will win. My God has and will continue to supply all my need. I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ. The devil cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me, and hell cannot handle me. I am a soldier.

Even death cannot destroy me. For when my commander calls me from His battlefield, He will promote me to captain and then allow me to rule with Him. I am a soldier in the army, and I'm marching claiming victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around. I am a soldier, marching heaven-bound...Here I stand! Will you stand with me?

-Unknown Author